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Insight into the strategies for undergraduates' practical translation proficiency: A quantitative analysis

Malak Alrousan*

Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics
West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV

*Correspondence: malakrafat0@gmail.com

Abstract

The emphasis on the exploration of the practical strategies for translation proficiency spurs from the need to produce well-trained translators who are equipped with the current demands in the translation industry. The current study explores relevant strategies which have proven effective in improving undergraduates' practical translation proficiency. With the integration of the use of quantitative research, prominent insights were gained from opinions of three-hundred and forty-one (341) research participants in regards to the research topic. Meanwhile, these research participants include two-hundred and sixteen (216) undergraduates studying translation and one hundred and twenty-five (125) educators who are currently teaching translation in various tertiary institutions. More so, these participants were randomly selected from various public and private universities. Nevertheless, these participants shared their respective views on some relevant strategies such as feedback mechanism, integration of technological tools, and continuous learning among others. Although, majority of the research participants emphasized more on the practical aspect of translation strategies. With the use of the quantitative methodology, relevant data were extracted from the opinions shared by the research participants. These data were further analyzed using descriptive statistics method. This method placed practical experience, feedback mechanism and technology integration, as very effective strategies. Nevertheless, the study concludes that the identified strategies only yield positive result based on the shared efforts of both translation educators and translation students.

Keywords: Translation Education, Translation Proficiency, Translation Proficiency Strategies



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1.0 Introduction

Attempts to define what ought to be translation proficiency by numerous researchers have paved way for the existence of different views and definition of translation proficiency or competence. Sittirak & Ranong (2022) affirmed that translation proficiency transcend from mere knowledge of translating from source language to the target language. However, it encompasses multifaceted skills which include cultural sensitivity, linguistic competence, and adept to technological tools among others.

On the other hand, there has been a significant change in the domain of translation education such that new approaches have been introduced to help equip translation students with relevant translation proficiency. However, plethora of studies have accounted for how these new approaches are different from the traditional method.

Before now, translation students were engaged with cultural immersion, hand translation, mentorship and apprenticeship, grammar and syntax mastery. According to Clavijo, B., & Marín, P. (2013), these traditional approaches provide translation students with the relevant foundation required for acquisition of translation proficiency. For instance, translation students are made to understand the rules and structures that govern a particular language, and when to apply those rules in translation work, Li (2002).

Nevertheless, new approaches were also introduced in the domain of translation education due to the several changes that have occurred in the translation industry. According to Khasawneh (2024), these changes were as a response to the ever demands of the translation market; hence the need to equip students with relevant skills to meet up with these demands. Meanwhile, these new approaches which were summarized in this study include, internship program, technology integration, feedback mechanism, extensive reading with original materials, and continuous exercise among others. The essence of exploring these strategies is to provide both translation students and educators with relevant information on the most effective strategies for effective development of practical translation proficiency.

2.0 Literature Review

This section is aimed at exploring existing literature on strategies for practical translation proficiency. More so, prominent concepts such as translation education, translation proficiency are discussed in order to provide basic knowledge to the goal of this study.

2.1 An Insight into Translation Education

As claimed by several scholars (Nguyen, Lee & Nguyen 2018; Lou & Liu 2017; Wu & Liao 2019 and Jiménez-Crespo 2015), translation is a complex activity that requires use of specific skills; hence the need for proper translation education. With translation education, students are taught the craft of transmitting a message from one language (source language) to another (target).

Meanwhile, Liu, Abdullah, & Kang (2022) traced the inception of translation education to the early civilizations such as ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and ancient China. According to Awezbeikova (2022), the approach to translation education at this period is hinged on development of language as well as cultural proficiency, emphasizing more on language proficiency and literal translation. In addition to this claim, Baker (2019) also confirmed that this approach to translation pedagogy largely adhere to translation theories with limited emphasis on hands-on training.

However, the domain of translation experienced a huge change in the 20th century. As asserted by JimenezCrespo 2015, this change emerged from the need to explore the structural elements of language (both the cultural and linguistic aspects). An account given by Alenezi (2020) in regards to the change in

translation education incorporated the integration of diverse domain such as ethnography. The scholarly work maintained that the attention of translation experts shifted to the need of exploring other domains in order help prepare students to succeed in a more globalized society.

Another major reason for the paradigm shift in the domain of translation education is the need for professionalism. Since the translation market needs professionals for translation jobs, translation students are expected to undergo training wherein there are equipped with the necessary professional skills. With this current demand in the field, Jolly & Maimone (2022) and Bowker (2020) claimed that translation education no longer focuses on the original and intended content but on the strategy of translation and translator, and also from instructor-driven to a more student-focused strategy.

Meanwhile, this existing paradigm shift in the translation industry paved way for diversified definitions of translation education by many scholars. Rather than the theoretical-based definition, Chen et al (2020) described translation education as a type of training students undergo to acquire cognitive, cultural, technical, domain knowledge, research and translation proficiencies. Similar to this definition is that of Li (2002); who defined translation from the pedagogical point of view. The scholarly work maintained that translation education is offered in order to bridge the gap between 'what translation program offers and what professional translators require at work'.

Clearly, the swift changes that have occurred in the translation field ushered in vital pedagogical strategies in translation education. Each strategies aim towards preparing the students with the essential skills required in the translation industry.

2.2 Current Trends in Translation Education And Strategies for Translation Proficiency

The current trends and strategies in the domain of translation education reflect the rapid development in the translation industry. As stated in the previous section, these developments were anchored on exploring different ways of equipping translators to meet the dynamic demands of the translation industry.

A quick review by Khasawneh, Khasawneh, Al-Sarhan & Alkhawaldeh (2023) highlighted technological integration as one of the trends in the domain of translation education. The scholarly work maintained that translation activities majorly rely on technological tools for efficient and error-free translation work. Additionally, Bolaños García-Escribano & Botella (2023) categorized these tools as machine translation, computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, and terminology management systems. Presently, translation education now encompasses teaching translation students the use of these tools. On the other hand, Rojo (2018) emphasized on how these technological based translation tools are slowly replacing human translators.

Another relevant trend as observed by Kiraly, R  th, & Wiedmann, (2016) is remote learning of translation. In contrast with the classroom-based learning which only requires teaching of translation by instructor, Alshehab (2013) claimed that this type of learning offers learners the opportunity to collaborate together using networking technology along with their instructor. While Oakley (2020), maintains that this method of learning help students to easily acquire relevant skill. Al-Jabr (2006) on the other hand, argued that despite the fact that this method improves learners' translation skills; it should never replace the conventional translation education.

A scholarly work, authored by Nguyen, Lee, & Nguyen (2018) emphasized on integration of diversified field. Meanwhile, Magaia (2014) maintained that the recent increase of the need for translators in some specific field such as legal, business, and medical, amongst others has prompted the addition of interdisciplinary programs in translation training. However, work from Selcen & Eryatmaz (2014) opined that translators, who wish to specialize in other field, should primarily focus on attaining

translation competence required in that particular field.

Meanwhile, several scholarly works (Cao 1996; Al Muhaidib 2009; Alshehab 2013; and Laviosa 2014) have provided different strategies for attaining effective translation proficiency. Askari & Nikoopour (2018) categorized these strategies into four. The first method encompasses training translation students in certain fields. While the second method focuses on teaching students on how to properly analyze text during translation, the third comprise of equipping the students with the skill of finding equivalents words in the target language. In the last method, Askari & Nikoopour (2018) noted that in this strategy, students are exposed to real-world translation activities. In the light of this, Gerding-Salas (2000) introduce a different translation procedure known as cooperative translation work. In this strategy, students' translation proficiency is improved via collective efforts of learning and task accomplishment.

Although, the above strategies as identified by different scholars prove effective in to helping students to improve their translation proficiency to some extents, this study only focuses on exploring several strategies which include feedback mechanism, internship, technology integration, specialization and domain knowledge, reflective practice, continuous learning, cultural immersion and extensive reading with original materials that ensures development of 'practical' translation proficiency.

2.3 Translation Proficiency: Preparing Students for Future Career in Translation

The implication of the swift development in the translation industry has paved way for continuous look-out on various ways to produce quality translators. Students who wish to have a better chance in the translation market are required to have certain translation proficiency. These skills range from the basic to the sought-after skills.

A better understanding of translation proficiency can be captured from the definition propounded by Cao (1996). According to the scholarly work, translation proficiency encompasses relevant competence and skills required to carry out translation tasks. As an element of translation proficiency, Roger (1991) highlighted three ways to describe translation competence. The first approach is the bilingual competence. Here a translator is required to be competent in the languages (both source and target language) he or she is working on. The second approach is known as the 'translator expert system'. In this system, the translator is expected to have certain knowledge, which includes linguistic, text-type, contrastive and domain knowledge. In addition to this knowledge, Roger (1991) also introduced inference mechanism; which permits the translator to be able to decode and encode both the source and target texts.

The final approach as identified by Roger (1991) aligns with Hymes' (1971) notion of communicative competence. This type of competence allows translator to be able to create communicative acts while translating texts. This includes;

1. *"Knowledge of the rules of the code which govern usage and knowledge of and ability to utilize the convention which constrain use.*
2. *Knowledge of the options available for the expression of all three macrofunctions of language and knowledge of and ability to use the options available for making clauses count as speech acts in conformity with the community ground-rules for the production and interpretation of a range of communicative acts."* (Roger 1991: pg 42)

Summarily, translation proficiency depicts what translators ought to have to fully function in the translation industry. However, the basic skill starts from linguistic and cultural mastery of the both source and target languages. Wu & Liao (2019) claimed that since translation involves rigorous processes,

translation students should not only know the grammar, vocabulary and syntax but also understand cultural nuances of both languages. Another important translation proficiency identified by Muftah (2023) is technological based skill. With the knowledge of the use of technological-based translation tools, translation students can position themselves better in the translation market. Additionally, Doherty (2016) argued that these tools increase productivity and quality of translated works.

Meanwhile, encouraging translation students to specialize in a particular domain also helps to improve their translation proficiency. The services of translators are sometimes needed in several industries such as legal, medical, business, amongst others. Nonetheless, specializing in some of these areas equips students with the ability and knowledge to work in these industries. Internship also offers students the platform to engage in real-life translation works. With this program, students are exposed to the ethics of translation. According to Khasawneh (2024), translation interns are taught to always desist from exposing their clients' works. Also, they are made to understand when and how to use technological-based translation tools when necessary.

2.4 Gap in the Literature

Translation proficiency is an important concept in the translation industry due to the demands for professionalism. Without translation proficiency, translators have little chances of making it in the industry. With this in mind, scholars have explored several strategies of improving the translation proficiency of translations students. Although, plethora of study have highlighted strategies like, technological integration, mastery of both source and target language, amongst others, there is a fewer studies that focuses on strategies that are able to ensure the attainment of practical translation skills. As such, this research seeks to explore this gap, in order to further provide educators the right information on how to improve their students' practical translation proficiency.

2.5 Research Questions

Based on the identified research gap, the following research questions are developed to guide the aim of this study.

- A. What are the strategies for practical translation proficiency, and to what extent do these strategies ensure improvement of practical translation proficiency of undergraduates?
- B. What are the perceptions of translation educators and students on the integration of these strategies in translation education?

3.0 Research Methodology and Procedure

A. Research Approach

The current study employed the use of quantitative methodology. In this methodology, relevant data are collected in mass to provide enough information for the research. Hence, the research engaged the respondents (translation educators and undergraduates) in order to seek their perspectives in regards to the research's goal. However, their opinions formed the basis of this current research's data.

B. Study Community

The two main stakeholders in regards to this research are the translation educators and students. Translation educators play an important role of teaching students the necessary translation skills that are required by the translation market. However, the opinions of these selected educators will provide relevant insight on best strategies to be adopted in improving the practical translation skills of

undergraduates. On the other, opinions of translation students also serve as a feedback; exposing the best way students feel that their translation proficiency can be improved.

C. Study Sample

As stated before, the total sample for this study include three-hundred and forty-one (341) research participants, comprising of two-hundred and sixteen (216) undergraduates studying translation and one hundred and twenty-five (125) educators who are currently teaching translation in various tertiary institutions. More so, these participants were randomly selected from various public and private universities. Below is the summary of the demographic information about the research participants.

Table 1: Demographic Variables

Category	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	161	47.21%
	Female	180	52.79%
Age	Less than 40	180	52.79%
	41-50	73	21.41%
	51-60	39	11.44%
	61+ above	49	14.36%
Educational Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	52	15.25%
	Master's Degree	153	44.87%
	PhD	136	38.88%
Years of Experience (for educators)	Less than 20 years	125	36.66
	21-40 years	100	29.33%
	40+ above	116	34.01%

D. Study Tools

The research made use of questionnaire in generating relevant data from the research participants. However, this questionnaire was made available to the respondent via their emails. The first section of it contains the demographic information about the respondents, while the remaining section focuses on

the research's main objective. Nevertheless, some of the survey items contained in the second part of the questionnaire were designed using 5-point likert scale; ranging from 1= ineffective to 5= very effective and 5=strongly to 1= strongly disagree.

E. Method of Analysis

The data generated from the responses of the research participants were analyzed using Statistical Package for the social Science (SPSS). On the other hand, the data were further analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage).

4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents and analyses the data generated for the study. Firstly, the data were presented based on the identified research questions using graphical element along with the given survey items. This is also followed by analysis; which further provides information about the analyzed data.

Q1. What are the strategies for practical translation proficiency, and to what extent do these strategies ensure improvement of practical translation proficiency of undergraduates?

Table 2: Result for Q1

S/N	Strategies	Very Effective	Effective	Moderately Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
1	Feedback Mechanism	61	32.6	5	0.9	0.5
2	Cultural Immersion	51.3	39	6.5	2.6	0.6
3	Internship program	38.7	49.3	11.4	0.6	0
4	Specialization and Domain Knowledge	46.2	44	6.5	2.1	1.2
5	Practical Experience	67.7	29	2.3	0.6	0.4
6	Technology Integration	54.3	41.1	2.8	0.9	0.9
7	Extensive Reading of Original Materials	32.3	14.11	50.62	2.1	0.9
8.	Continuous Learning	30.8	20.2	47.8	1.2	0

Note. Mean= 4.26, SD= 0.5

The table above represents the perceptions of translation educators and students on the strategies for practical translation proficiency, and to what extent these strategies ensure improvement of practical translation proficiency of undergraduates. However, the data presented are interpreted and summarized as thus;

1. In terms of using feedback mechanism as an effective strategy, more than 50% of the research participants affirmed that this method is very effective in the development of undergraduates' translation proficiency. Moreover, 0.5% of the respondents considered this strategy as effective.
2. There is also a positive response from the respondents in regards to cultural immersion. 51.3% of the research participants considered cultural immersion as an effective strategy to translation proficiency. On the other, few numbers of the total participants considered this strategy as somewhat (2.6) effective and others ineffective (0.6).
3. In regards to the internship program, 49.3% of the research sample claimed that this strategy is effective. Although, none of the participants claimed that this method is ineffective, as opposed to other ones.

4. Specialization and domain knowledge is another important strategy for effective development of practical translation proficiency. Meanwhile, majority of the participants have similar view about this. From the table, 46.2% considered this strategy as very effective, while 44% of the participants considered it as effective strategy.
5. Practical experience seems to be the most effective strategy as seen from the table above. In order words, 67.7% of the respondents affirmed that practical experience is a better strategy that ensures effective practical proficiency of translation undergraduates. On the other hand, a small portion of the participants (0.4%) considered this strategy ineffective.
6. Technology integration is another important strategy identified in the table above. Here, more than 50% of the research participants affirmed that this strategy is very effective. Despite the fact that a small portion (0.9%) of the population considered this strategy ineffective, 41.1% of the population confirmed the strategy 'effective'.
7. Meanwhile, 50% of the research participants affirmed that extensive reading of original materials moderately aid in improving translation proficiency of undergraduates.
8. Lastly, less than 40% of the respondents affirmed that continuous learning is very effective in improving translation proficiency of undergraduates. Contrastively, this strategy can be considered moderately effective compared to other strategies.

Q2: What are the perceptions of translation educators and students on the integration of these strategies in translation education?

The following are the survey items that were developed in regards to the first research question.

- i. Do you integrate technology for practical translation proficiency?
- ii. How often do you integrate them?
- iii. Do you believe that these strategies identified in the previous section are better than the traditional method?
- iv. Do you encounter problem while using these strategies for practical translation proficiency?
- v. Based on your experience, do you think that these strategies can complement the traditional language teaching method?
- vi. Do you prefer the traditional method to these strategies?

Table 2: Result of Q2

Survey Items	SA	A	N	SD	D	Mean	St.D
Q1	31.09	32.26	22.87	10.26	3.5	3.46	1.23
Q3	34.01	43.99	14.66	5.87	1.47	4.01	1.05
Q4	3.81	17.60	35.19	28.74	14.66	2.34	0.89
Q5	22.28	35.18	26.39	13.22	2.93	3.67	1.10
Q6	14.95	20.53	14.66	20.53	29.33	2.14	0.95

Figure 1: Result of the second survey item

The table and pie chart above represent the second research question which seeks to inquire the perceptions of the research participants (translation educators and students) in regards to the integration of the identified pedagogical strategies for practical translation proficiency. Nevertheless, the findings of the above table are interpreted and summarized below.

1. Based on the findings, a significant number of the research population affirmed that they integrate technology for practical translation proficiency. However, more than 50% of the respondents

affirmed to this postulation. On other hand, the mean score (3.46) generated in the first survey item further reveal the fact that technological tools are constantly integrating by both the translation educators and students. Meanwhile, the standard deviation (1.23) shows a moderate level of affirmation among the respondents

2. The result of the second survey item is represented in the pie chart above. From the chart it can be deduced that a greater number of the participants (55%) affirmed that they frequently make use of these strategies. This finding also aligns with the responses of the research participants in regards to the first survey item.
3. The third survey item compared the identified strategies in this study to the traditional pedagogical method. Majority of the research participants (more than 70%) confirmed that these strategies are better than the traditional method; which only based on learning the linguistic and cultural aspects of translation. However, the mean (4.0) shows stronger affirmation by the respondents on the effectiveness of these strategies.
4. Meanwhile, the fourth survey item explored the challenges translation educators and students may encounter in the course of utilizing these strategies. A number of the participants (35.19%) shared a neutral stance in regards to this survey items. However, a few number of the respondents affirmed that they encounter challenges while less than 40% of them disagree.
5. In terms of complementing the identified strategies with the traditional method, 22.28% of the population strongly affirmed to this alignment while, 26.39% of them were neutral. The identified mean and standard deviation show that that the number of participants who affirmed to this proposition is more than those that disagree.
6. Finally, in terms of choosing between the traditional method and these identified strategies a significant number of the study participants affirmed that they would not. Although, 14.66% of the participants express a neutral stance on this.

4.1 Discussion

Translation process is an activity that goes beyond mere conversion message from the source language to the target language. The rigorous activities involved in translation for a quality end-product requires that the translator ought to posse relevant skills to accomplish this task. These skills are what make an individual a translator, Selcen & Eryatmaz (2014). In simpler term, an individual who possesses these skills is said to be proficient in translation.

Meanwhile, the current research explored practical strategies for effective attainment of practical translation proficiency by undergraduate. Its primary focus was to bring to limelight proven strategies that ensure practical translation proficiency. In order to achieve this goal, the current study engaged some selected translation educators and undergraduates. Their opinions towards the goal of this study provided a lot of insight that is worthy and relevant to the domain of translation education.

Nevertheless, the study explored some relevant strategies such as feedback mechanism, cultural immersion, internship, technology integration, specialization and domain knowledge, among others. Nonetheless, individuals who participated in this research were asked several questions in regards to these identified strategies. Their responses were analyzed and used to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies.

One of the most relevant strategies identified in this research is feedback mechanism involves seeking for feedback from experts or peers for in-depth knowledge of a particular area. Lou & Liu (2017) claimed that this method enable collaboration among translation students, providing them with platform for improving their translation proficiency. Supporting this view, Suyasa et al (2023) revealed

that task-based activity which is also a form of feedback mechanism enable translation students to develop a cognitive ability that will enable them to effectively carry out translation tasks.

Another important strategy identified in this study is cultural immersion. Bueden et. al (2009) maintain that translation entails carrying both the linguistic and the cultural aspects of the source language to the target. Hence, teaching students the practical ways of immersing themselves with the language they are working on do not enhance their translation proficiency but also prepares them ahead of their career in the translation industry.

Internship program and practical experience are strategies that expose students to real-world translation work experience. Internship program avails students to understand and familiarize themselves with translation work ethics and practical application of the translation theories that they have been taught in school. On the other hand, technology integration proves to be an effective strategy that ensures effective attainment of translation proficiency. Nowadays, translators employ the use of technological tools during translation process. However, these technological-based translation tools make the translation process easy and less-time consuming. Compare to the traditional method of translation, works translated using technological tools are now considered more quality than human translated works, Baker et.al (2019). In the light of this, integrating these tools while teaching translation and also teaching students on how to use them enables them to develop practical translation proficiency. As a relevant strategy, specialization and domain knowledge avails translators to work in any industry of their choice. However, translation undergraduates should be encouraged to diversify. This will enable them to offer their translation services in different industries. The remaining strategies identified in this study are extensive reading of original materials and continuous. As seen from the data analyzed, these two strategies are considered less effective compared to other ones.

Since translation requires a whole lot of skills and processes, equipping students with these identified strategies will enable them to develop practical translation proficiency required to strive better in the translation industry. Nevertheless, this study has shown that both translation students and translation educators share almost the same ideology in terms of the effectiveness of the identified strategies. It is the duty of the translation educators to employ these strategies while teaching, and it is also the duty of the translation students to adopt applicable ones such as feedback mechanism, technology integration, continuous learning among others while learning translation. Hence, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of these strategies also lies on the efforts put forward by both the translation teachers and learners.

5.0 Conclusion

The current study highlighted eight effective strategies that can help translation undergraduates to develop practical translation proficiency. An important fact about these strategies is that they deviate from theoretical aspect of translation pedagogy. These strategies assure practicality of translation pedagogy. Students are no longer taught the theories, but they are engaged with practical activities as a way to teach them the rudiments of translation process. Although, traditional method mainly focuses on theories; which serve as a foundation block for translation proficiency, the identified strategies in this study can complement this method for effective improvement of students' translation proficiency. As discussed in this study, these strategies include feedback mechanism, technology integration, practical experience, internship amongst others. The study concludes that the effectiveness of these strategies can only yield positive outcome base on the active adoption of these strategies by both the translation educators and students.

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